



Security Council

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Letter dated 6 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I attach herewith the response of the Government of the Republic of Uganda to the allegations by the Monitoring Group on Somalia of arms dealing in Somalia involving some Uganda People's Defence Forces personnel (see annex).

I should be very grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Francis K. Butagira
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 6 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

5 June 2008

Response of the Government of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations Monitoring Group's allegations of arms dealing in Somalia

On 2 April 2008, the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia established under Security Council resolution 751 (1992) presented a report on the state of compliance and effectiveness of the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia. The report contains numerous positive elements which, if adopted, could further enhance international efforts aimed at recreating and bringing peace to Somalia. Uganda, as the leading country in this effort, welcomes all actions aimed at achieving this primary objective.

The many positive elements in the report notwithstanding, Uganda finds the allegation that Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) personnel sold arms to insurgents totally untrue and outrageous and believes that it may prove detrimental to its valiant efforts in favour of peace in Somalia.

As indicated in the report, the Monitoring Group discussed this matter with various Ugandan officials, who indicated their serious concern at such conduct and behaviour and promised an immediate and thorough investigation. Indeed, this investigation was carried out. It was found that the allegations were false. It was also discovered that those rumours had been initiated by elements hostile to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It would have been foolhardy for UPDF personnel to arm insurgents to whom they have lost colleagues.

Uganda therefore dismisses these allegations as falsehoods on the following basis:

1. It is not and shall never be the policy of the Government of Uganda, let alone that of UPDF, to sell arms to any group, whether inside or outside Somalia.
2. It is inconceivable that UPDF would sell arms and ammunition to groups opposed to its presence in Somalia, as such arms would only be turned against UPDF personnel.
3. The arms borne by the UPDF contingent in Somalia are serialized and fully accounted for, and the Ugandan contingent has never established an armoury or store that keeps what the Monitoring Group calls "Shabaab weapon caches".
4. Any act allegedly committed by any member of UPDF, if it is so established, would be taken as an individual act not sanctioned by either UPDF or the Government of Uganda and any such member, if found guilty of any such act would, after due process, face the full weight of the law so established to the maximum extent possible.

It is interesting, however, to observe that the allegations contained in the Group's report are very similar to those that had appeared earlier, in November 2007, on www.saacid.org, the website of the non-governmental organization SAACID, a group opposed to the deployment of AMISOM. It would appear that the Group simply picked those allegations and used them to produce its report without substantiating them and without giving due consideration to the negative impact the report would have on the African Union mission and the countries that have so far sacrificed and contributed troops to the noble cause of pacifying Mogadishu and, finally, Somalia as a whole.
